



## How to Protect Yourself from Safety and Health Hazards During Cleanup Operations

Cleanup work of any kind is hazardous, but flood conditions make it even more so. Following the procedures listed below will help to keep you healthy and safe while cleaning up after a flood.

### Health Tips

- Take frequent rest breaks when lifting heavy, water-laden objects. Avoid overexertion and practice good lifting techniques.
- When working in hot environments, have plenty of drinking water available, use sunscreen, and take frequent rest breaks.
- Be sure a first-aid kit is available to disinfect any cuts or abrasions. Protect open cuts and abrasions with waterproof gloves or dressings.
- Wash your hands often during the day, especially before eating, drinking, or applying cosmetics.

### General Precautions

- Use a wooden stick or pole to check flooded areas for pits, holes, and protruding objects before entering.
- Ensure that all ladders and scaffolds are properly secured prior to use.
- Conduct a preliminary worksite inspection to verify stability before entering a flooded or formerly flooded building or before moving vehicles over roadways or surfaces.
- Washouts, trenches, excavations, and gullies must be supported or their stability verified prior to worker entry. All trenches should be supported (e.g., with a trench box); if no support is available, the trench must be sloped at no less than a 1:1 (45°) angle.
- Establish a plan for contacting medical personnel in the event of an emergency.
- Report any obvious hazards (downed power lines, frayed electric wires, gas leaks, or snakes) to appropriate authorities.
- Use fuel-powered generators only in well-ventilated areas.
- Use life-vests when engaged in activities that could result in deep water exposure.
- Use extreme caution when handling containers holding unknown substances or known toxic substances (for example, floating containers of household or industrial chemicals). Contact the Environmental Protection Agency for information on disposal (1-800-424-8802).
- Do NOT use improvised surfaces (e.g., refrigerator racks) for cooking food or for boiling water to avoid exposure to heavy metals.

### Clothing and Personal Protective Equipment

- Always wear safety shoes, gloves, long pants, and safety glasses during cleanup operations; sneakers should NOT be worn because they will not prevent punctures, bites, or crush injuries. Wear a hardhat if there is any danger of overhead falling debris.
- Wear appropriate respiratory protection if working with moldy building materials or vegetable matter (hay, stored grain, or compost).
- When handling bleach or other chemicals, follow the directions on the package, wear eye and face protection as appropriate, and have plenty of clean water available for eye wash and other first-aid treatments.

### Electrical Hazards

- Do NOT touch downed power lines or any object or water that is in contact with such a line.
- Beware of overhead and underground lines when clearing debris.
- If damage to an electrical system is suspected (e.g., if the wiring has been under water, you can smell burning insulation, wires are visibly frayed, or you see sparks), turn off the electrical system in the building before beginning work and have an electrician check the system.
- When using a generator, be sure that the main circuit breaker is OFF to prevent the backflow of electricity to the outside of the building you are working in.
- Any electrical equipment, including extension cords, used in wet environments must be marked, as appropriate, for use in wet locations and must be undamaged. Be sure that all connections are out of water.
- All cord-connected, electrically operated tools and equipment must be grounded or double insulated.
- Ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) must be used in all wet locations. Portable GFCIs can be purchased at hardware stores.

### Fire Protection

- Immediately evacuate any building that has a gas leak until the leak is controlled and the area ventilated.
- Be sure an adequate number of fire extinguishers are available and reevaluate the fire evacuation plan.
- Be sure all fire exits are clear of debris and sand bags.

## OSHA Area Offices

| Area               | Telephone      | Area                  | Telephone      | Area               | Telephone      |
|--------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Albany, NY         | (518) 464-4338 | Denver, CO            | (303) 844-5285 | Nashville, TN      | (615) 781-5423 |
| Albuquerque, NM    | (505) 248-5302 | Des Plaines, IL       | (847) 803-4800 | New York, NY       | (212) 466-2482 |
| Allentown, PA      | (610) 776-0592 | Des Moines, IA        | (515) 284-4794 | Norfolk, VA        | (757) 441-3820 |
| Anchorage, AK      | (907) 271-5152 | Englewood, CO         | (303) 843-4515 | North Aurora, IL   | (630) 896-8700 |
| Appleton, WI       | (920) 734-4521 | Erie, PA              | (814) 833-5758 | Oklahoma City, OK  | (405) 231-5351 |
| Augusta, ME        | (207) 622-8417 | Fort Lauderdale, FL   | (954) 424-0242 | Omaha, NE          | (402) 221-3182 |
| Austin, TX         | (512) 916-5783 | Fort Worth, TX        | (817) 428-2470 | Parsippany, NJ     | (973) 263-1003 |
| Avenel, NJ         | (908) 750-3270 | Frankfort, KY         | (502) 227-7024 | Peoria, IL         | (309) 671-7033 |
| Baton Rouge, LA    | (225) 389-0474 | Harrisburg, PA        | (787) 277-1560 | Philadelphia, PA   | (215) 597-4955 |
| Bayside, NY        | (718) 279-9060 | Hartford, CT          | (860) 240-3152 | Phoenix, AZ        | (602) 640-2007 |
| Bellevue, WA       | (206) 553-7520 | Hasbrouck Heights, NJ | (201) 288-1700 | Pittsburgh, PA     | (412) 395-4903 |
| Billings, MT       | (406) 247-7499 | Honolulu, HI          | (808) 541-2685 | Portland, OR       | (503) 326-2251 |
| Birmingham, AL     | (205) 731-1534 | Houston, TX           | (281) 286-0583 | Providence, RI     | (401) 528-4669 |
| Bismarck, ND       | (701) 250-4521 | Houston, TX           | (281) 591-2438 | Raleigh, NC        | (919) 856-4770 |
| Boise, ID          | (208) 321-2960 | Indianapolis, IN      | (317) 226-7290 | Salt Lake City, UT | (801) 487-0680 |
| Bowmansville, NY   | (716) 684-3891 | Jackson, MS           | (601) 965-4606 | San Francisco, CA  | (619) 557-2909 |
| Braintree, MA      | (617) 565-6924 | Jacksonville, FL      | (904) 232-2895 | Savannah, GA       | (912) 652-4393 |
| Bridgeport, CT     | (203) 579-5581 | Kansas City, MO       | (816) 483-9531 | Smyrna, GA         | (770) 984-8700 |
| Calumet City, IL   | (708) 891-3800 | Lansing, MI           | (517) 377-1892 | Springfield, MA    | (413) 785-0123 |
| Carson City, NV    | (702) 885-6963 | Linthicum, MD         | (410) 865-2055 | St. Louis, MO      | (314) 425-4249 |
| Charleston, ArV    | (304) 347-5937 | Little Rock, AR       | (501) 324-6291 | Syracuse, NY       | (315) 451-0808 |
| Cincinnati, OH     | (513) 841-4132 | Lubbock, TX           | (806) 472-7681 | Tampa, FL          | (813) 626-1177 |
| Cleveland, OH      | (216) 522-3818 | Madison, WI           | (608) 264-5388 | Tarrytown, NY      | (914) 524-7510 |
| Columbia, SC       | (803) 765-5904 | Marlton, NJ           | (609) 757-5181 | Toledo, OH         | (419) 259-7542 |
| Columbus, OH       | (614) 469-5582 | Methuen, MA           | (617) 565-8110 | Tucker, GA         | (770) 493-6644 |
| Concord, NH        | (603) 225-1629 | Milwaukee, WI         | (414) 297-3315 | Westbury, NY       | (516) 334-3344 |
| Corpus Christi, TX | (512) 888-3420 | Minneapolis, MN       | (612) 664-5460 | Wichita, KS        | (316) 269-6644 |
| Dallas, TX         | (214) 320-2400 | Mobile, AL            | (334) 441-6131 | Wilkes-Barre, PA   | (717) 826-6538 |
|                    |                |                       |                | Wilmington, DE     | (302) 573-6115 |

## OSHA Consultation Project Directory

| Regional Offices   | Telephone      | State                | Telephone           | State          | Telephone         |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| <i>Region I</i>    |                | Alabama              | (205) 348-3033      | New Hampshire  | (603) 271-2024    |
| Boston, MA         | (617) 565-9860 | Alaska               | (907) 269-4957      | New Jersey     | (609) 292-3923    |
| <i>Region II</i>   |                | Arizona              | (602) 542-5795      | New Mexico     | (505) 827-4230    |
| New York, NY       | (212) 337-2378 | Arkansas             | (501) 682-4522      | New York       | (518) 457-2238    |
| <i>Region III</i>  |                | California           | (415) 703-5270      | North Carolina | (919) 807-2905    |
| Philadelphia, PA   | (215) 596-1201 | Colorado             | (970) 491-6151      | North Dakota   | (701) 328-5188    |
| <i>Region IV</i>   |                | Connecticut          | (860) 566-4550      | Ohio           | (614) 644-2246    |
| Atlanta, GA        | (404) 562-2300 | Delaware             | (302) 761-8219      | Oklahoma       | (405) 528-1500    |
| <i>Region V</i>    |                | District of Columbia | (202) 576-6339      | Oregon         | (503) 378-3272    |
| Chicago, IL        | (312) 353-2220 | Florida              | (850) 922-8955      | Pennsylvania   | (724) 357-2396    |
| <i>Region VI</i>   |                | Georgia              | (404) 894-2643      | Puerto Rico    | (787) 754-2171    |
| Dallas, TX         | (214) 767-4731 | Guam                 | 011- (671) 475-0136 | Rhode Island   | (401) 222-2438    |
| <i>Region VII</i>  |                | Hawaii               | (808) 586-9100      | South Carolina | (803) 734-9614    |
| Kansas City, MO    | (816) 426-5861 | Idaho                | (208) 426-3283      | South Dakota   | (605) 688-4101    |
| <i>Region VIII</i> |                | Illinois             | (312) 814-2337      | Tennessee      | (615) 741-7036    |
| Denver, CO         | (803) 844-3061 | Indiana              | (317) 232-2688      | Texas          | (512) 440-3854    |
| <i>Region IX</i>   |                | Iowa                 | (515) 965-7162      | Utah           | (801) 530-6901    |
| San Francisco, CA  | (415) 975-4310 | Kansas               | (785) 296-7476      | Vermont        | (802) 828-2765    |
| <i>Region X</i>    |                | Kentucky             | (502) 564-6895      | Virginia       | (804) 786-6359    |
| Seattle, WA        | (206) 553-5930 | Louisiana            | (225) 342-9601      | Virgin Islands | (809) 772-1315    |
|                    |                | Maine                | (207) 624-6460      | Washington     | (360) 902-5638    |
|                    |                | Maryland             | (410) 880-4970      | West Virginia  | (304) 558-7890    |
|                    |                | Massachusetts        | (617) 727-3982      | Wisconsin      | (608) 266-8579(H) |
|                    |                | Michigan             | (517) 322-6823(H)   |                | (414) 521-5063(S) |
|                    |                |                      | (517) 322-1809(S)   | Wyoming        | (307) 777-7786    |
|                    |                | Minnesota            | (651) 297-2393      |                |                   |
|                    |                | Mississippi          | (601) 987-3981      | (H) - Health   |                   |
|                    |                | Missouri             | (573) 751-3403      | (S) - Safety   |                   |
|                    |                | Montana              | (406) 444-6418      |                |                   |
|                    |                | Nebraska             | (402) 471-4717      |                |                   |
|                    |                | Nevada               | (702) 486-9140      |                |                   |